

# Preventing / Avoiding Dog Bites



An estimated 4.7 million people in the United States are bitten by dogs each year. While about 2,500 of these are letter carriers, children are the most common victims of severe dog bites. Dog-bite injuries are a serious problem in our country, but they're a problem we can solve. Here's how:

- Spay or neuter your dog. Dogs who have **not been spayed or neutered are three times more likely to bite** than are dogs who have been spayed or neutered.
- **Train and socialize your dog** so that it is comfortable being around people, including friends, neighbors, and children.
- **Never play "attack" games with your pets.** They won't always understand the difference between play and real-life situations.
- **If you don't know how your dog will react to a new situation, be cautious.** When a letter carrier or other service person comes to your door, be sure your dog is safely restrained or confined.

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Department of Health and  
Human Services



**City of Long Beach**  
**Animal Care Services Bureau**  
7700 E. Spring Street  
Long Beach, CA 90815



Phone: (562) 570-PETS Fax: (562) 570-3053  
[www.longbeach.gov/acs](http://www.longbeach.gov/acs)

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- If your dog exhibits aggressive behaviors such as growling, nipping, or biting, even on an occasional basis, seek professional advice from your veterinarian, an animal behaviorist, or a skilled dog trainer.
- Never approach a dog you don't know or a dog who is alone without his owner, especially if the dog is confined behind a fence, within a car, or on a chain.
- Don't disturb a dog who is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.
- Don't pet a dog, even your own, without letting him see and sniff you first.
- When approached by a dog you don't know, don't run or scream. Instead, stand still with your hands at your sides and do not make direct eye contact with or speak to the dog. Teach children to "be a tree" until a dog goes away and practice this response with a stuffed toy dog.
- If you are knocked to the ground, curl into a ball with your hands over your ears. Lie still and keep quiet until the dog goes away. Teach children to "lie like a log" until a dog goes away.
- If a dog attacks, you may be able to decrease injury by "feeding" him your jacket, purse, bicycle, or anything else that can serve as a barrier between you and the dog.

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